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HOUSEMAKERS' CHAT

Thursday August 8, 1940.

Subject: "CANNING QUESTIONS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

August is the month when canning jobs come thick and fast, with one fruit after another ripe and requiring attention, as well as all the vegetables in the kitchen garden. Today's mailbag contains several canning questions. As usual, the answers are from the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Here's a letter from a woman with a special dietary problem in her family. "Is there any way to can fruits without sugar? One member of our household is on a special diet, and cannot eat fruits canned with heavy sirup. If there is any difference in the way you can when you leave out the sugar, will you please explain it?"

The canning experts in the Bureau of Home Economics say you may add sugar or not as you wish. But the fruits retain their shape, color, and flavor better when canned in a sugar sirup. But for the person on a special diet it isn't much trouble to can some jars without sugar.

One thing you do differently when canning without sugar is to cover the juicy fruits, such as berries, cherries, currants, and plums, with their own juices instead of water, to make a richer flavored product. Extract juice from the riper fruits by crushing, heating, and straining. Heat the other fruit in this juice, pack hot into containers, partially seal glass jars, and process in the boiling water bath.

If you are canning in tin, use the sanitary enamel cans for berries, cherries, currants, and plums. The colored fruits need the protection of the enamel lining to keep the tin from discoloring them.



When you can the less juicy fruits, such as apples, peaches, and pears. without sugar, you'll have to add water. Use very little water, though, so as to preserve all the natural fruit flavor possible.

If you don't already have a copy of Farmers' Bulletin 1762-F, Home Canning of Fruits, Vegetables, and Meats, better send for a copy so you'll have a timetable to go by. The time for processing many fruits is different.

The next writer wants to know about canning fruit juices without sugar. She says: "I am told that it is possible to can fruit juices in the summer, and later on, when it is more convenient, make them into jelly. Will the jelly made in this way be just as good as when you carry the work right through at one time? How long can you keep the canned juice before making jelly?"

The Bureau of Home Economics says you will be able to make jelly from the good jellifying fruit juices whenever you want to. For those fruits that don't have enough pectin naturally you'll have to add pectin. You can store fruit juices up to 6 months and get jelly with just as good texture as that made from the fresh juice, though the color and flavor may not be quite so good, especially in the case of the red fruits. Extract the juice just as you would if you were going to make it into jelly at once. Then process it in the containers in a hot water bath at 180 degrees Fahrenheit.

Now we come to a letter from a woman who wants to know the best size can to use for meats and vegetables. "We are a family of seven. Wouldn't it be time-saving to can almost everything in Number 3 or larger cans?"

The size of the family is not the only point to consider in canning food at home, the Bureau of Home Economics says. Any convenient size can or jar is suitable for canning fruits or tomatoes, because they are juicy and acid. They heat through quickly. They're not hard to sterilize so they'll keep.

But smaller size cans or jars are better for the non-acid vegetables and meats. They heat through slowly, and they must be heated to a very high temperature





to kill bacteria that may cause spoilage. Especially when there is a thick mixture like sweet corn, it take a long time to heat the food to the center of the container. Use only the steam pressure canner for canning meats and non-acid vegetables.

The Bureau says to use a number 2-1/2 can or quart jar for canning most vegetables. But use a Number 2 can or pint jar for canning cream-style corn, for peas and lima beans, and preferably for meats. Corn forms a compact mass in the can, and peas and limas are starchy vegetables with thick skins. It is possible to can meats in Number 2-1/2 tin cans, but the processing time is longer. The Bureau does not recommend using Number 3 cans for meat because of the long period required, even in the steam pressure canner.

Last question: "Some of the ladies in our community club think we might can surplus vegetables and fruits this summer, for school lunches next winter. Do you think this worth while?"

Yes, indeed. Canned fruits, vegetables, and soups are a very worth while addition to children's school lunches. In fact, I have a letter right here, a story about a country school: I'll read it:

"Already we are canning and getting ready for the next school term. Last winter we served soup, or some kind of hot food each day, under the most trying circumstances, with the most meager equipment, yet the school attendance, and gain in weight, of the children, justified our efforts."

Any women who are interested in starting a canning project like this might begin with tomatoes, tomato juice, and fruits. These need only the hot water bath. But, as we've just said, other vegetables must be canned under steam pressure,-- in your own, or a community, pressure cooker. Perhaps there's a community canning center where you could do this. Anyway, whatever your canning problem, don't forget that copies of the "canning bulletin", Number 1762-F, are still to be had from the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

